

The University of Chicago

MARK TWAIN'S REVISIONS IN WRITING
THE INNOCENTS ABROAD

A PART OF A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY
OF THE DIVISION OF HUMANITIES IN CANDIDACY FOR
THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH AND LITERATURE
1945

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MARK TWAIN'S REVISIONS IN WRITING
THE UNCONSCIOUS ARTIST

A STUDY IN THE REVISIONS OF THE WRITING
OF THE NOVELS OF MARK TWAIN
BY THE AUTHOR OF THE REVISIONS OF THE WRITING
OF THE NOVELS OF MARK TWAIN

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS



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MARK TWAIN'S REVISIONS IN WRITING THE INNOCENTS ABROAD

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WHEN MARK TWAIN returned from the *Quaker City* excursion in November, 1867, and contracted with the American Publishing Company of Hartford to put his experiences into a book, he had more than his notebook to draw from. He had made the excursion as a reporter, and had sent to the *Alta California* some fifty letters, which he intended to use in compiling the book. The letters demanded revision, however, and for six months Clemens worked over them. He revised in the light of two facts: (1) he was addressing a different audience from the one he had addressed in his newspaper letters, and (2) he was now writing, not newspaper articles, but a book. He realized that because his audience was "on this side of the Rocky Mountains," he would have to "weed [the letters] of their chief faults of construction and inelegancies of expression . . . strike out certain letters, and write new ones."¹ He was aware, too, that the *Alta* letters "were newspaper matter, not book matter," and that "they were loosely constructed and needed to have some of the wind and water squeezed out of them."² These two factors—audience and form of publication—demanded that Clemens revise his *Alta* letters. It is the purpose of this study to show how the book differs from the letters and what exactly Clemens did to make it different. An exhibiting of these changes is instructive in revealing something of how Mark Twain operated as a writer.³

I

In the first place, *The Innocents Abroad* is clearer than the *Alta* letters.⁴ Besides omitting, for the benefit of his new audience,

¹ Letter to Elisha Bliss, Jr., Dec. 2, 1867, in Albert Bigelow Paine (ed.), *Mark Twain's Letters* (New York, 1917), I, 141.

² Albert Bigelow Paine (ed.), *Mark Twain's Autobiography* (New York, 1924), I, 245.

³ Mr. Delancey Ferguson has noted some of the changes (*Mark Twain: Man and Legend* [New York, 1943], pp. 135-137). Though I agree with some, but not all, of his conclusions regarding Mark Twain's revisions, it seemed to me that a more thorough treatment than he has given them would be of value to Mark Twain students. I am indebted to Mr. Joseph Rosenberg, of Chicago, for the privilege of examining his file of photostatic copies of the *Alta California*.

⁴ The headings "clarity," "variety," "propriety," and "humor," under which I have

practically all references to the West Coast, Clemens changed his expression in small ways to make it worthy of book publication. One finds him deleting redundancies,⁵ clarifying pronominal references,⁶ adding words to improve coherence⁷ and to correct misstatements⁸—in short, revising carefully throughout the book, in order to “weed the letters of their chief faults of construction.”

Perhaps the most important addition making for clarity was Clemens's insertion of whole passages in an effort to preserve the continuity of the journey. If continuity had been unimportant in the letters, appearing irregularly in the *Alta*, it was important in a book, to be read more or less continuously. To achieve continuity, Clemens added paragraphs that carry the reader with him from place to place. In one letter, for instance, he had treated the Azores and in another, Gibraltar, but had written nothing about the passage from the one place to the other. In the book he included an account of that passage.⁹ A number of such additions occur in the book, all of them serving to make clear the itinerary and enabling the reader to share the feeling of the movement of travel.¹⁰

Such changes in wording and substance helped to clarify the narrative. So did the more complex changes that involved a re-ordering of material. Clemens admitted that the letters had been

grouped the revisions represent merely the areas in which the book differs from the newspaper letters. Although it seems likely that Clemens made certain changes in order to gain clarity, in order to improve the humor, and so on, I do not mean to imply, in using these headings, that I am certain of his motives in revising.

⁵ E.g.: Many cities in the East “have perished and have vanished from the earth,” he wrote originally; the “have perished and” he struck out in revision (*Alta California* [hereinafter referred to as *Alta*], 11/17/67; *The Innocents Abroad*, “Uniform Trade Edition,” [2 vols. in 1; New York, 1911; hereinafter referred to as *IA*], II, 123:32). All references are to volume, page, and line.

⁶ E.g.: “Finally, they captured the place, drove the Russians out, and they tried to retreat into the town . . .” (*Alta*, 11/1/67). In revision this sentence becomes “Finally, they captured the place, and drove the Russians out, who then tried to retreat into the town . . .” (*IA*, II, 97:12-14).

⁷ E.g.: “However” (*IA*, I, 57:8) and “likewise” (*IA*, I, 226:25) were added in revision.

⁸ “They only allow women to enter [the Chapel of St. John the Baptist] on one day in the year, on account of the animosity they still cherish against the sex because of the murder of the Saint to gratify a caprice of Herodias” (*IA*, I, 162:11-15). *Alta*, 9/8/67, reads: “. . . the murder of the Saint by Herodias.” Although there is nothing to indicate that Clemens went out of his way to make his reporting exact, it is true that in revision he made several changes for the sake of accuracy. The glorious period in Venice's history, for instance, was not “three hundred” but “five hundred years ago” (*Alta*, 10/13/67; *IA*, I, 223:15).

⁹ *IA*, I, 48:1-49:29.

¹⁰ *IA*, I, 59:30-60:16; I, 79:15-17; I, 148:9-27; I, 156:1-157:25; I, 198:1-200:20; I, 216:20-217:13; I, 259:31-261:23; II, 137:1-139:11; II, 149:1-151:23.

"loosely constructed." Although this flaw was not serious in newspaper dispatches, it would be serious in a book. To avoid it, he reorganized a number of passages. Such rearrangement sometimes involved moving large portions of the text to more appropriate places in the narrative. For example, in the middle of one letter (*Alta*, 10/10/67), the third of three letters dealing with Naples and the ascent of Mount Vesuvius, Clemens breaks off the discussion abruptly, saying, "But what has this got to do with Venice?" He then goes on in the rest of the letter to relate his experiences upon first entering that city. In the book this passage¹¹ is placed where it logically belongs, with the other material on Venice.

The order of details, too, he improved in revision. Consider his description of Milan cathedral. In the *Alta* letter he presents, in three successive paragraphs, descriptions of the exterior of the building, as seen from the street, the interior, and again the exterior, this time as seen from the top of the cathedral. The order appears to be the order of his experience. In the book, however, the progression of details is easier to follow because the writer combines the portions treating the exterior, and then describes the interior.¹²

He changed the ordering of details, too, in his description of Damascus. The *Alta* passage reads as follows:

In a vast level plain Damascus sits, a great snow-white city nestling in the heart of a sea of brilliant green shrubbery that stretches for fifteen

¹¹ *IA*, I, 219:13—222:24. Mark Twain knew what he was doing in the letter; at the end of this passage, which concludes the letter, he wrote that the Venice passage "brings me, by a natural and easy transition, back to the legitimate subject of this letter, which is—The Descent of Vesuvius—Continued. I will speak of this in my next." The entire discussion of the ascent of Vesuvius, in the book as in the letters, is full of digressions, with the author continually returning, "by a natural and easy transition" (*Alta*, 10/6/67; *IA*, II, 26:18), to the subject announced in the repeated headnote: "Ascent of Vesuvius—Continued." The digressions are put in for the sake of humor, but the lack of unity in the entire Vesuvius passage may have resulted from the distracting conditions under which Clemens at the time was writing. In a bracketed sentence near the beginning of the Vesuvius passage, he says: "I am not aware that I know what I am trying to write about; this is the first time I have been on board the ship for six weeks, and this morning I was pluming myself upon the quiet day I was going to have, but now I have only written a dozen lines here in the cabin and already all those anticipations of quiet are blighted; there is one party of Italian thieves fiddling and singing for pennies on one side of the ship, and a bagpiper, who only knows one tune, on the other; I am expecting to go crazy every minute, and if I do, I hope I will be driven to massacre those parties before I come to my senses again" (*Alta*, 10/1/67).

¹² The passage "Within the church . . . rather than walk" (*IA*, I, 172:15-23) appears in *Alta*, 9/15/67, immediately following the paragraph ending ". . . a fleet of coasters" (*IA*, I, 171:17). The transition "We descended and entered" (*IA*, I, 172:15) was added in accordance with the change.

miles up and down the plain and is five or six miles wide. Outside of that billowy expanse of shining foliage is the desert—pure, unadulterated, yellow sand, apparently, and smooth as velvet, and threaded far away with fine lines that stand for roads, and dotted with creeping mites that we know are camel-trains and journeying men—and fencing in the desert are bald, bare mountains that have no green thing about them to soften their forbidding aspect. From Mahomet's stand-point you have the wall of dreary mountains, the wide, yellow desert, the dense mass of rich green foliage and the great white city with its hundred domes and its forest of minarets, gleaming out of the midst of it. You have these for a picture—and when you think of the leagues of blighted, blasted, sandy, rocky sun-burnt, ugly, dreary, infamous country you have ridden over to get here, you think it is the most beautiful, beautiful picture that ever human eyes rested upon in all the world! If I were to go to Damascus again, I would camp on Mahomet's hill about a week, and then go away. There is no need to go inside the walls. The Prophet was wise without knowing it when he decided not to go down into the Paradise of Damascus.¹³

The details here are arranged first in order of decreasing attractiveness—the city, the foliage, the desert, the mountains; then they are reviewed in the reverse order, from Mahomet's standpoint. Clemens apparently thought the latter order was preferable, for in *The Innocents Abroad* he abandons the attractive-unattractive order entirely.¹⁴ The change is an improvement. Since it is the attractiveness of Damascus that he wants to show, it is reasonable for him to begin with the unattractive surroundings and then to follow an order of climax, which emphasizes the beauty of the city by means of contrast. That Clemens himself reasoned this way about the problem is suggested by an added phrase in the book, in which he speaks of "strong contrasts" that "heighten the effects" of the scene.¹⁵

II

Besides being in many ways clearer than the *Alta* letters, *The Innocents Abroad* is considerably more varied. Again it is the form of publication that determined the difference. The newspaper reader would not remember clearly from one weekly installment to the next what Clemens had said or how he had said it; but for the reader of a book, variety, both of expression and of subject matter, was necessary.

¹³ *Alta*, 12/15/67.

¹⁶ *LA*, II, 177:24.

¹⁴ *LA*, II, 177:12—178:7.

One way Clemens achieved this quality was to cut out the repetition in the letters. Certain words seem to have been on the tip of his tongue, for they appear in the letters quite frequently. Such a term is "rusty," which he uses in a mildly derogatory sense. He retained the word at several places in the book; but the fact that he deleted it or replaced it with another on at least six occasions¹⁶ shows he was conscious of using it too frequently.¹⁷ Other such words are "jolly," "astonisher," and "swindle."

Repetition of words in the same passage, and particularly in the same sentence, Clemens also avoided in revision. Note his original comment on Versailles:

It was worth a pilgrimage to see. Everything is on so grand a scale. Nothing is small—nothing is cheap. The statues are all large; the promenade is vast; the palace is grand; the park covers a fair-sized country; the avenues are interminable. All the distances and all the dimensions about Versailles are vast.¹⁸

Such a passage is an exercise in synonym hunting. In revision Clemens thought up "gigantic" to replace the first "grand" in the second sentence. But he avoided the repetition of "vast" simply by removing the clause in which it first appears.¹⁹

Small changes like these helped him avoid monotony of expression. More important for the purpose of achieving variety were changes in subject matter. The contents of *The Innocents Abroad*, in contrast to the *Alta* letters, are notably diversified. As many contemporary reviewers noted, the book appeals to many tastes; it includes personal adventure, fresh descriptions of famous places, snatches of history, interesting retellings of stories, humorous

¹⁶ *IA*, I, 162:28: "rusty" becomes "smoky"; II, 25:10-11: "rusty-looking wretch" becomes "vagabond"; II, 42:13: "rusty mummy" becomes "dusty mummy"; II, 246:10: "rusty vagabonds"—("rusty" deleted); II, 257:17: "rusty old ruins" becomes "gray old ruins"; II, 329:1-2: "the same rusty looking, dusky Oriental squaws"—("rusty looking" deleted, and "squaws" becomes "women").

¹⁷ Of course he may have rejected the term because it was slang. Still, the fact that he did not always delete it would argue that when he did, he had in mind avoiding not so much slang as needless repetition.

¹⁸ *Alta*, 9/5/67.

¹⁹ See *IA*, I, 150:11-16. Such evidence of Clemens's efforts to avoid repetition tends to qualify Howells's remark that Mark Twain would not go out of his way to avoid repetition. Wrote Howells: "On minor points he was, beyond any author I have known, without favorite phrases or pet words. He utterly despised the avoidance of repetitions out of fear of tautology. If a word served his turn better than a substitute, he would use it as many times in a page as he chose" (*My Mark Twain* [New York, 1910], p. [18]).

anecdotes. This miscellaneous character of the book's substance Mark Twain achieved in revision.

The first fourteen letters to the *Alta* follow Clemens's itinerary from the Azores through Italy. Although there is a vein of humor running through them, these letters are composed largely of a combination of straight description and personal narrative. It is the material added in revision that gives this section of the book its variety. Consider, for instance, the portion of the book that deals with Paris. It has been said that this passage, in its diversity, is typical of the book.²⁰ It is,²¹ but the point to be noted here is that this section is new. Except for one letter on Versailles, Clemens had sent nothing on Paris to his newspapers. It is clear, then, that in compiling the book he sought to introduce new and varied material.

Quite as important as the new material was its order of arrangement. Following the procedure he observed in his lectures,²² Clemens arranged his material to produce a motley effect. For instance, Chapters VIII and IX of Book I (*Alta*, 8/31/67, and 9/1/67), on Tangier, are made up largely of personal narrative and straight description and exposition. The same is true of Book I, Chapter XVI (*Alta*, 9/5/67), which deals with Versailles. But between these chapters Clemens inserted a wide variety of material: a passage ridiculing the Oracle, the butt of many of his jokes, an account of the Fourth of July celebration aboard ship, a humorous personal anecdote that hinges on the travelers' ignorance of the French language, straight description of French railroads, French customs, and French architecture, satire on a loud American and on Old Travelers who know everything, an episode involving the guide Ferguson, a retelling of the story of Heloise and Abelard, and so on.²³

As the book progresses, however, there are fewer changes in-

²⁰ Bernard DeVoto, *Mark Twain's America* (Boston, 1932), p. 246.

²¹ The passage is representative of Clemens's method. The Paris section, though, is more varied than other parts of the book.

²² Describing the method of "The American Vandal Abroad" in a letter to Mrs. Fairbanks, Clemens pointed out that all through the lecture he had alternated passages of straight description with passages of wild humor. (The letter, dated Hartford [Oct., 1868], is in the Huntington Library, HM14235. The important Clemens-Fairbanks correspondence is being edited for publication by Professor Dixon Wecter. The reader is referred to this forthcoming publication for many comments by Clemens on the preparation of *IA*.)

²³ Likewise, chaps. xxi, xxiii, and xxvii (Book I), all added in revision, contribute to the *mélange*.

volving large bodies of material.²⁴ Later in the book, letter follows letter, often with very few changes or additions.²⁵ But—and this is the point—such additions as Clemens made,²⁶ either because of their position in the text, or because of their humorous nature, or both, did help him gain variety.

III

A number of significant changes were made for the sake of decorum. The book was intended to sell primarily in the East, and Eastern taste was quite different from Western.²⁷ Clemens recognized this difference; in a letter to the *Alta*, published July 14, 1867, he speculates on the probable popularity in East and West of the recently published *Sut Lovingood's Yarns*:²⁸

[The book] contains all his early sketches, that used to be so popular in the West, such as his story of his father "actin' hoss," the lizards in the camp-meeting, etc., together with many new ones. The book abounds in humor, and is said to represent the Tennessee dialect correctly. It will sell well in the West, but the Eastern people will call it coarse and possibly taboo it.²⁹

²⁴ *Alta* letters #15-23 (10/18/67-11/10/67), for instance, follow nearly consecutively. Also, of the 53 letters that appeared in the *Alta*, only 10 were incorporated into Book I of *IA*, whereas 39 were incorporated into Book II.

²⁵ Clemens was tired of the book by this time. Moreover, he had to hurry to meet his publisher's dead line. Mr. Delancey Ferguson is probably right when, in speaking of the composition of *IA*, he says that Clemens "began with a burst of enthusiasm which carried him about halfway. Then the task became irksome; the enthusiasm of expression waned, and he snatched at any material which could be levied on to fill up the contracted number of pages" (*Mark Twain: Man and Legend*, p. 137). But his comment that "the continuity of the *Innocents* is the continuity of the tour it records, nothing more" (*ibid.*) is not, in light of the above evidence, wholly accurate.

²⁶ It is true of practically all the added passages of any length in Book II, for instance, that (1) they are humorous, many of them containing humorous dialogue, (2) they are placed at the beginning of chapters, and (3) they precede passages of straight description or matter-of-fact personal narrative. See *IA*, II, 44:1-47:16; 119:1-122:9; 137:1-139:11; 149:1-151:23; 216:1-219:27.

²⁷ Noah Brooks gives an idea of what the West liked in Mark Twain: "I remember very well the disappointment with which we read Mark Twain's contribution to the first number of the [*Overland Monthly*, July, 1868]. It was entitled 'By Rail through France,' [i.e., what corresponds to *IA*, I, chaps. xi and xii] and did not show a gleam of that humor which had given him so much vogue through his newspaper letters. Subsequent numbers of the magazine showed fruits of his literary industry, but it was not until the October number appeared that he delighted his readers with a goodly show of his genius. Certainly that paper, 'A Medieval Romance,' [*IA*, I, chap. xxi] . . . was extravagant and grotesque enough to satisfy the most exacting of his admirers" ("Mark Twain in California," *Century*, LVII, 99 [November, 1898]).

²⁸ By George Washington Harris (New York, 1867).

²⁹ Cf. a letter written to Mrs. Fairbanks (dated San Francisco, July 5 [1868], HM14229), in which Clemens acknowledges the difference between a Western and an Eastern lecture

Consequently, in recognition of the more genteel taste of his new readers, Clemens tried in several ways to adapt his writing to them—by purifying his expression, by deleting or modifying coarse passages, and by altering his remarks in order to avoid the charge of blasphemy.

To make his language more acceptable, Clemens made it somewhat more formal. For one thing, he raised the general level of diction. "Wanted to go," for instance, he changed to "wished to go";³⁰ "chance" becomes "opportunity";³¹ "try" becomes "attempt."³² He also revised many colloquial terms: "he had been fooled" becomes "he had been deceived";³³ "They are after the general effect" becomes "They seek the *general* effect."³⁴ Such colloquialisms as contracted verb forms and a chatty "well"³⁵ at the beginning, or "you know"³⁶ in the middle of a sentence also were lost in revision. And, of course, he removed or altered a great deal of the slang.³⁷

Besides trying to achieve a more polite expression, Clemens omitted from the book several expressions which he must have thought would offend. He struck the word "mangy,"³⁸ turned "jackass" into "donkey,"³⁹ and "lies" into "exaggerations."⁴⁰ And in telling how a Turkish cook dusted off a pancake he had dropped in the dirt, Clemens in the book says merely that he "polished it on his breeches," whereas the original version reads "polished it on the seat of his breeches."⁴¹

More reasonable are other omissions. In the book Clemens re-

audience. His lecture on Venice was a huge success, he writes, but he doubts whether the same lecture would be well received by the "Quaker City" audience or by an audience in an Eastern city.

³⁰ *Alta*, 9/15/67; *IA*, I, 171:18.

³¹ *Alta*, 10/1/67; *IA*, II, 15:2.

³² *Alta*, 10/6/67; *IA*, II, 21:3.

³³ *Alta*, 8/27/67; *IA*, I, 58:5.

³⁴ *Alta*, 9/5/67; *IA*, I, 151:11.

³⁵ *Alta*, 8/25/67; *IA*, I, 46:10.

³⁶ *Alta*, 9/8/67; *IA*, I, 158:30, following "because."

³⁷ When he felt he had to have the slang term, he made it legitimate by adding quotation marks; so the quotes around "yanked" (*IA*, II, 68:31), "keep the hang" (*IA*, II, 100:3), and "taking them up" (*IA*, II, 132:33) all were added in revision. Once he added an apology in a footnote for including a slang term (*IA*, II, 159). Changes of this sort were prompted by Mrs. Fairbanks. Frequently in his letters to her in 1868 Mark Twain reported that in both lecture and book he was avoiding slang in compliance with her prohibition. The correspondence reveals Mrs. Fairbanks's influence at this time to have been all that it has been represented.

³⁸ *Alta*, 10/1/67; deleted from *IA*, II, 19:7: "the mangy population."

³⁹ *Alta*, 8/25/67; *IA*, I, 43:29.

⁴⁰ *Alta*, 8/31/67; *IA*, I, 64:20-21. The euphemism in this case is not humorous.

⁴¹ *Alta*, 10/29/67; *IA*, II, 86:28.

frains from saying that the "Oracle is vulgar and smells bad."⁴² He also foregoes a "gag" about "greasy" Italian priests.⁴³ Some of the words, too, one can understand his altering. "Bawdy-house,"⁴⁴ "slimy cesspool,"⁴⁵ "stink"⁴⁶—these he could be pretty sure would offend many readers.

References to gambling he thought were better omitted.⁴⁷ And in revising the account of the ascent of Vesuvius, he left out an ungentlemanly remark about the ladies' skirts.⁴⁸ But the concession to gentility that he must have made most grudgingly involves an omission that truly weakens a satiric passage. Speaking of people who scribble their names in public places, he had this to say: "It is a pity some great ruin does not fall in and flatten out some of these cattle and scare their tribe out of ever giving their names to fame upon any walls again, *save those of the water-closets where they were wont to inscribe them before they wandered from their native land.*"⁴⁹ The revised version necessarily lacks the contempt of the original.

But it was chiefly Mark Twain's irreverence that had alarmed his publishers,⁵⁰ and not without reason. There is a good deal in *The Innocents Abroad* that even today offends the pious. They object to Clemens's outspoken criticism of the superstition, corruption, and hypocrisy exhibited by the Church. The book does contain such criticism. Nevertheless, a reading of the *Alta* letters shows the book to be more temperate than the newspaper version. The publishers may not have succeeded in getting Clemens to water

⁴² *Alta*, 8/27/67: "eats for four, and is vulgar and smells bad and looks wiser. . . ." Italicized words deleted from *IA*, I, 57:10.

⁴³ "They are all fat and greasy. They would try out well. The generality of them would yield oil like a whale" (*Alta*, 9/8/67; deleted from *IA*, I, 161:27).

⁴⁴ *Alta*, 9/29/67; *IA*, II, 39:19 reads "one house."

⁴⁵ ". . . the slimy cesspool that lives in history as the Blessed Pool of Bethesda" (*Alta*, 4/12/68) becomes "the historic pool of Bethesda" (*IA*, II, 327:9).

⁴⁶ *Alta*, 10/1/67; *IA*, II, 14:31 reads "smell offensively."

⁴⁷ "Venice reverences those relics [the ashes of St. Mark] above all things earthly. *She bets her all on St. Marks*" (*Alta*, 10/13/67; italicized words deleted from *IA*, I, 229:23). "Our homes are desolate, our friends are dead. Behold, the jig is up—let us ante up and pass the buck" (*Alta*, 11/24/67; italicized words deleted from *IA*, II, 148:13).

⁴⁸ "To see our comrades, we had to look very nearly straight up at those above us, and very nearly straight down at those below. *The ladies wore no hoops, which was well. They would have looked like so many umbrellas*" (*Alta*, 10/10/67; italicized words deleted from *IA*, II, 30:7).

⁴⁹ *Alta*, 12/8/67; italicized words deleted from *IA*, II, 171:9.

⁵⁰ When the directors realized they were fostering a blasphemous enterprise, they wanted Clemens to withdraw the book. (See Bernard DeVoto [ed.], *Mark Twain in Eruption* [New York, 1940], pp. 147-148.)

down his text as much as they liked, but it is clear that in revising the letters Clemens was governed to some extent by a concern for orthodox opinion.⁵¹

Typical of the changes made to avoid irreverence is that dealing with the journey from Damascus. Clemens wrote originally that the party "passed the spot where they say Saul was so abruptly converted";⁵² in the book he struck out the "they say,"⁵³ and with it a tone of skepticism. Again, he assails the Medicis' presumption in providing but one mausoleum for themselves and for Christ, saying that "What they had not the cheek to do was not worth doing. And," he continues, "*they wouldn't even have been content to sleep around the outside of the Sepulchre, those dead Medicis—they would have got up and climbed in. Say nothing about cheek when you are talking about that family.*"⁵⁴ Such omissions show Clemens to have made some effort not to seem "frivolous . . . irreverent . . . [or] blasphemous."⁵⁵

Passages he did not want to reject altogether he altered to avoid the charge of profanation. The following example is typical. The author is objecting to such a loose construction of Biblical prophecy as takes in cities as well as persons:

Alta

If *they* [the inhabitants] were "faithful unto death," they have their crown now—but I don't care if they had fagged themselves out in the good work, and gone to all manner of preposterous lengths of faithfulness, they would still have found that they couldn't ring in the

IA

If *they* were "faithful unto death," they have their crown now—but no amount of faithfulness and legal shrewdness combined could legitimately drag the *city* into a participation in the promises of the prophecy. The stately language of the Bible refers to a crown of life

⁵¹ It is possible that San Francisco preachers may have influenced the revisions. Some of them had read the *Alta* letters and had not approved. Clemens, somewhat puzzled, mentioned their attitude to Mrs. Fairbanks. What had he written about the Holy Land, he asked her, that would so arouse them? Many of them were condemning him from pulpits, though they, to be sure, were the second-rate preachers; those of rank and influence were still his friends (Letter dated June 17 [1868], HM14227).

⁵² *Alta*, 12/29/67.

⁵³ *IA*, II, 192:5-6.

⁵⁴ *Alta*, 9/27/67; italicized words deleted from *IA*, I, 267:21.

⁵⁵ The terms are Mark Twain's (*IA*, II, 10:27-29). They appear in a statement defending an honest criticism of Catholic belief in Rome. Most of such criticism Clemens retained in the book. (He confesses to an anti-Catholic bias, *IA*, II, 349.) The omitted passages were usually those in which the religious material was introduced for the sake of humor.

city for a crown of life. That would have been crowding things too much. If they could have shown that the promise included the city, too, it would have raised real estate faster than a railroad. These remarks are eminently practical, I know, but still there is reason in them.⁵⁶

whose luster will reflect the day-beams of the endless ages of eternity, not the butterfly existence of a city built by men's hands, which must pass to dust with the builders and be forgotten even in the mere handful of centuries vouchsafed to the solid world itself between its cradle and its grave.⁵⁷

The slang ("fagged themselves out," "ring in," "crowding things"), the derision implied in "preposterous lengths of faithfulness," and the all-important joke about the value of real estate make for a flippancy that is almost wholly lacking in the revision. The criticism of "the modern prophecy-savans" is kept; but in becoming more serious it becomes more tolerable.

IV

Perhaps the most notable difference between *The Innocents Abroad* and the *Alta* letters is the book's superior humor. Seeking to make his humor worthy of preservation in a book and palatable to Eastern readers, Clemens made three significant revisions: (1) he cut out much harsh criticism inappropriate in a work predominantly humorous; (2) he cut out the weaker humor and the broader humor of the letters; and (3) he developed a humor that is richer than that in the letters.

Most of the efforts Clemens made to sweeten the book involved removing some of the abuse he had heaped upon the *Quaker City* pilgrims. For instance, he omitted a short passage exposing the niggardliness of the pilgrim he had dubbed "Interrogation Point."⁵⁸ Clemens did not hesitate to ridicule him for purposes of humor; but he thought better of including what is simply an attack on the man's character.

Of these omissions of passages criticizing the pilgrims the most conspicuous are those having to do with their religious habits and

⁵⁶ *Alta*, 11/17/67.

⁵⁷ *LA*, II, 125:7-18.

⁵⁸ "... Mediterranean Sea! And he rode a mule all day and then was not forthcoming when the driver of it (the creature they call a 'scorpion') came for his money. And he dickered and fussed over a few cents in a bargain with a poor devil Arab for some fruit in front of the hotel, in the presence of an audience of many nations, till some of the passengers snatched him away and threatened to hang him" (*Alta*, 8/27/67; deleted from *LA*, I, 59:29).

beliefs. Clemens was annoyed at the pilgrims' tendency to see in everything a fulfilment of divine prophecy. On one occasion he "took a drink out of Ananias's well," noting that "the water was just as fresh as if the well had been dug yesterday." He continues:

I was deeply moved. I mentioned it to the old Doctor, who is the religious enthusiast of our party, and he lifted up his eyes and his hands and said: "Oh, how wonderful is prophecy!" There isn't any prophecy about that rusty old well, but that is just his gait; when he don't know anything else to say, he always comes out with that: "Oh, how wonderful is prophecy!" I start a bogus astonisher for him every now and then, just to hear him yelp.⁵⁹

Fishermen mending their nets, too, were for the pilgrims a fulfilment of prophecy. Clemens writes in the *Alta*:

If you will take the trouble to glance through a few books of Palestine travel, you will notice that the authors impartially and invariably dwell with moving pathos upon this matter of seeing the fishermen mending their nets. And they always seem astonished at it. Taking their cue from the books, our pilgrims, and all other pilgrims, make it a point to be much affected when they behold this net-mending process. They all speak of it with exultant delight, and apparently with a dim notion that some how or other it is a sort of fulfilment of prophecy, or that it is a clincher on something, or is in some inscrutable way a Bulwark of Christianity. To be on Galilee and not see the fishermen mending their nets, could not be regarded in any other light than that of a calamity. Very well, we have seen it, and are happy. I suppose it is only a natural effect of all this, that a notion I was hardly conscious of myself has crept into my head that the fishermen have never done anything with their nets but mend them, from time immemorial; and now it is likely that if any of us were to see them actually engaged in fishing with them, it would strike us irresistibly as a curious and interesting phenomenon.⁶⁰

The omitted passages also question the piety of the pilgrims, which Clemens was unable to reconcile with their habit of hunting relics at holy shrines. In the *Alta* he exposed the inconsistency, but he omitted such gibes from the book. Elsewhere he does score the pilgrims' relic-hunting;⁶¹ but here the scene is Egypt and not the Holy Land, and therefore no aspersions are cast on the piety

⁵⁹ *Alta*, 12/22/67; deleted from *IA*, II, 186:14.

⁶⁰ *Alta*, 2/2/68; deleted from *IA*, II, 246:11.

⁶¹ *IA*, II, 363.

of the pilgrims. He did not hesitate to include in the book mild criticism and ridicule of his fellow-travelers, but he stopped short of seriously criticizing their religious devotion. He did like the people,⁶² and probably omitted the most serious criticism of them in order not to seem ill-natured.⁶³

Many of the weaker humorous passages in the *Alta* letters Clemens deleted entirely. Some of the "gags" simply are not funny, and he did right in rejecting them. So, for instance, he omitted a joke in which he claims innocently to be looking for the Lady of Lyons and other fictional personages.⁶⁴ And a joke about Noah's feeding oysters to the animals in his ark, carried too far in the *Alta*, becomes more pointed as a result of a deletion.⁶⁵

Weak "snappers" or "gag lines," usually at the end of a paragraph, he cut out. In some cases, the omitted "cracks" are merely extravagant, not very funny.⁶⁶ In other cases the incongruous lines are amusing enough, but Clemens apparently felt their incongruity to be out of place. For instance the "snapper" at the end of a passage on Vesuvius detracts from the serious impression the author wants to make, and hence he omitted it.⁶⁷ Such omissions show that Clemens, in preparing his material for book form, was more discriminating in his humor than he was in the *Alta* letters.⁶⁸

Typical of the broad humor Clemens cut out in order to suit his new readers are the passages involving his friend Brown. This fictitious traveling companion he had first met and written about in the Sandwich Islands. Thereafter Brown had accompanied Clem-

⁶² See *IA*, II, 172:12-15 and II, 228:13-229:6, *passim*. Both of these passages were added in revision.

⁶³ Mrs. Fairbanks's influence is seen here, too. Apparently she tried to dissuade Clemens from satirizing the pilgrims unmercifully. See Clemens's letter to her, dated Washington, Feb. 20 [1868], HM14223.

⁶⁴ *Alta*, 9/22/67; deleted from *IA*, I, 206:10.

⁶⁵ ". . . oyster suppers. He couldn't afford it, anyhow. He had been out eleven months, and they must all have been on short rations for some time" (*Alta*, 11/21/67; deleted from *IA*, II, 133:25).

⁶⁶ "If I had a wife as ugly as some of those I have seen, I would go over her face with a nail-grab and see if I couldn't improve it" (*Alta*, 9/1/67; deleted from *IA*, I, 75:11).

⁶⁷ "The Vesuvius of to-day is a very slow affair compared to the mighty volcano of Kilauea, in the Sandwich Islands, but I am glad I visited it, *partly because* it was well worth it, *and chiefly because I shall never have to do it again*" (*Alta*, 10/10/67; italicized words deleted from *IA*, II, 32:12-13).

⁶⁸ Howells wrote, "It is impossible . . . that the quality of humor should not sometimes be strained in the course of so long a narrative; but the wonder is rather in the fact that it is strained so seldom" (Review of *IA*, in the *Atlantic Monthly*, XXIV, 765 [Dec., 1869]). The fact that it is not strained oftener is due in part to Clemens's revisions.

ens, by way of the Isthmus, from San Francisco to New York,⁶⁹ and thence to Europe aboard the *Quaker City*. In the *Alta* letters Clemens reported Brown's sayings, many of which are fairly amusing. But it is easy to see why in the book he had to censor them. Besides being ignorant, Brown is vulgar. No doubt he drew laughs in San Francisco, but Clemens probably thought him a little crude for the East. What happened, as a result, is that many of Brown's remarks, usually the vulgar ones, were dropped. Clemens retained the comments that reflect Brown's ignorance; in the book, however, they are attributed not to Brown but to a "thoughtful old Pilgrim,"⁷⁰ to Jack,⁷¹ and, most often, to Blucher.⁷²

But scrapping inappropriate matter was not all that was involved in suiting the book to the new audience. Clemens also added a number of humorous passages, some of them justly famous as being among the outstanding parts of the book.

Besides adding new quips, including "snappers" which probably occurred to him as he read over his manuscript,⁷³ he added

⁶⁹ See Franklin Walker and C. Ezra Dane (eds.), *Mark Twain's Travels with Mr. Brown* (New York, 1940).

⁷⁰ *IA*, I, 59:18.

⁷¹ *IA*, II, 86-87, *passim*.

⁷² *IA*, I, 32-33; I, 37-38; I, 44; I, 72-73; I, 187-188; II, 98; II, 117; II, 155. At times, of course, the character of Brown is merged with that of Clemens's assumed character, Mark Twain. Clemens had used Brown originally as a mouthpiece for his cruder and more inane remarks. But as time went on, he gave up most of the crude ones; and as he developed the character of Mark Twain, he himself, in the character of his pseudonym, could utter the inanities. It is for this reason chiefly that Brown disappears from Clemens's writing, even by the time of *IA*. One example will illustrate the point. When Brown asks the guide if Leonardo is dead, and is told that he has been dead for three hundred years, the "information seemed to give Brown great satisfaction," Clemens wrote, "and the gloom passed away from his countenance" (*Alta*, 9/22/67). The same relief is voiced by Mark Twain when he learns Michaelangelo is no longer alive: "I never felt so fervently thankful, so soothed, so tranquil, so filled with a blessed peace, as I did yesterday when I learned that Michael Angelo was dead" (*IA*, I, 300:31-301:2).

⁷³ *IA*, I, 52:24-28, "it was . . . make it up"; I, 70:9-10; I, 100:32, last sentence; I, 124:2-4; I, 207:18-21, "I . . . acquaintance"; II, 164:17-19, "not much . . . diving-bell." Revision also involved turning a serious remark into a humorous one. The original and revised versions of a remark about the visit to the Czar are as follows: "the Imperial family bade our mob good-bye, and said they would see them again on board the ship" (*Alta*, 11/6/67). Cf. *IA*, II, 110:23-24, where the italicized words are supplanted by "proceeded to count the spoons." The joke is repeated in an added paragraph, II, 114:8-10. And the tone of a passage on Pompeii in *IA* is entirely different from the comparable passage in the newspaper, as the result of Mark Twain's turning a serious commentary into a humorous one. *Alta*, 9/29/67 reads thus: "By . . . a stone sentry box, just outside the city wall, we saw where the gallant mail-clad soldier stood his fearful watch that dreadful night, till he died, scorning to desert his post till he heard the relief call which was never more to sound." It is not unreasonable to suppose that Clemens, in rereading these lines, saw that they were a bit turgid, and consequently punctured his own grandilo-

several humorous anecdotes. The glove-buying episode,⁷⁴ the account of the Parisian tour with the guide Ferguson,⁷⁵ and the sailors' burlesquing of the party's visit to the Czar⁷⁶ all appeared for the first time in the book. It is not the humor at the narrator's expense that distinguishes these pieces; there is an abundance of that in the letters. Rather, it is the fact that they are leisurely and detailed, and involve several characters who are realized by means of dialogue. Seldom in the letters is a humorous situation, involving characters and dialogue, developed to the extent it is in these passages in the book.

In *The Innocents Abroad*, as in his later works, it was in the humorous anecdote that Mark Twain excelled. Perhaps the most revealing thing one notices, in collating the *Alta* text with that of the book, is the way some of these anecdotes took shape. They appear in the *Alta* letters, frequently, but there they are undeveloped, and undistinguished. It is interesting to see what Clemens did to improve them.

Compare the Paris shaving episode⁷⁷ with the original version as it appeared in the *Alta*, 9/22/67:

Speaking of barbers reminds me that in Europe they do not have any barber-shops. The barbers come to your room and skin you. (I use that term because it is more correctly descriptive than shave.) They have a few trifling barber-shops in Paris, but the heaviest establishment of the kind we could find only boasted three barbers. There, as everywhere else in Europe, as far as our experience goes, they put a bowl under your chin and slop your face with water, and then rub it with a cake of soap, (except at Gibraltar, where they spit on the soap and use no bowl, because it is handier;) then they begin to shave, and you begin to swear; if you have got a good head of profanity on, you see the infliction through; but if you run out of blasphemy, there is nothing for it but to shut down on the operation till you recuperate. The further I go, the worse the barbers get. Along, at first, it answered well enough to swear in English, but I do not think I could worry with another Italian shave unless I knew how to swear in seven different languages. My beard must grow now till I see America again.

quence by the addition of the policeman joke (*IA*, II, 41:22-29). But then, having decided to insert the "gag," he had to go back and improve the build-up, which he did by inflating the passage even further than he had the original. Compare *IA*, II, 41:13-21 with the quotation from *Alta*, 9/29/67, cited above.

⁷⁴ *IA*, I, 60:26-63:31.

⁷⁶ *IA*, II, 119:16-122:9.

⁷⁵ *IA*, I, 111:1-117:25.

⁷⁷ *IA*, I, 106:28-108:27.

In the first place, there is an air of reality about the later version which is lacking in the *Alta* account. Clemens has particularized the episode, related it as one distinct occasion, instead of reporting it as the habitual practice of Parisian barbers. Too, he has added a build-up in the retelling. He pictures vividly and enthusiastically the blissful experience he had imagined a shave in Paris to be. Following this vision of tonsorial bliss is a passage which is amusing in itself (the humor resulting from the author's ignorance of Parisian customs) and which also, by deferring the account of the shave, allows the vision of luxury to become more firmly fixed in the reader's mind. Consequently, when Mark Twain relates what the shave was really like, he is able to present himself as a disillusioned as well as lacerated man. And the humor increases as his predicament becomes aggravated. The account of the shave itself is related in greater detail with a more vivid imagery than in the *Alta* version, again making more real the victim's torture and hence increasing our amusement. In what the revised version omits, too, it is superior: the self-conscious first parenthesis, which is neatly turned into an effective "snapper" in the later version, the crude second parenthesis, and the rather unfunny comments on swearing. Such changes reveal Clemens adapting his material to his new audience; the revised version is more to their taste. They also reveal Clemens developing as an artist.

When he revised *Alta*, 9/8/67, to form part of Book I, Chapter XVII, of *The Innocents Abroad*, he decided to omit a passage dealing with the guide and to develop it more fully elsewhere. In place of the omitted passage he wrote, "I shall speak further of this guide in a future chapter."⁷⁸ Here is the omitted *Alta* passage, which clearly is the origin of the famous Columbus passage that appears later in the book:⁷⁹

He showed us three manuscript letters written by Columbus (they are kept in a marble pillar in the municipal palace under triple lock), and when I asked him if Columbus wrote them himself, he said "Oh, no." I said "Then who the devil did write them?" and he said he didn't know.

I began to suspect that this fellow's English was shaky, and I thought I would test the matter. He showed us a fine bust of Columbus on a pedestal, and I said, "Is this the first time this person, this Columbus,

⁷⁸ *IA*, I, 161:9-10.

⁷⁹ *IA*, I, 302-308.

was ever on a bust?" and he innocently answered, "Oh, no." I began to think, then, that when he didn't understand a question, he just answered, "Oh, no," at a risk and took the chances. So I said, "This Columbus you talk so much about—is he dead?" And the villain said quietly, "Oh, no!" I tested him further. I said, "This palace of the Dorias which you say is so old—is it fifty years old?" "Oh, no." "Is it five hundred?" "Oh, no." "It's a thousand, though, ain't it?" "Oh, yes." So his plan was to answer, "Oh, no," twice, always and then, "Oh, yes," by way of a change. All the information we got out of that guide we shall be able to carry along with us, I think.

The superiority of the revision is apparent enough. The basis of the humor is no longer the guide's ignorance of English but rather his consternation in the face of the questions put to him by these inspired idiots. The guide is confronted not by one interrogator, but by a group, who gang up on him and who presumably enjoy his discomfiture among themselves. Even the bedeviled guide, with his rather remarkable accent, comes alive in the book. And it is an improvement that the "bust" pun, since it had to stay, is in a more strategic position in the later version. This is not the sort of thing Clemens had been accustomed to writing for his San Francisco readers; perhaps it did not suit them so well as his earlier brand of humor. But there can be little question that it is subtler and as such was more appealing to his Eastern audience.

Clemens had mentioned William C. Prime, author of *Tent Life in the Holy Land*,⁸⁰ in an *Alta* letter in which he had ridiculed sentimentality.⁸¹ In the book he not only broadened the scope of his satire to include Prime's theatricality,⁸² the dishonesty of his

⁸⁰ New York, 1857.

⁸¹ "I have read all the books on Palestine, nearly, that have been printed, and the authors all wept. When Mr. Prime was here, before he wrote his curious 'Tent Life in the Holy Land,' he wept, and his party all wept, and the dragoman wept, and so did the muleteers, and even a Latin priest, and a Jew that came straggling along. It would have been just as cheap to believe that the camels and the asses wept also, and fully as likely; and he might as well have added them to the water company likewise. Prime got such a start then that he never could shut himself off; and he went through Palestine and irrigated it from one end to the other. No man was ever so easily affected as he, probably. Whenever he found a holy place that was well authenticated, he cried; whenever he found one that was not well authenticated, he cried anyhow, and took the chances; whenever he couldn't find any holy place at all, he just cried 'for a flyer,' as the worldly say. No man ever enjoyed a funeral as Prime did his Sentimental Journey through the Holy Land. How his horse ever kept his health, being exposed to these periodical showers all the time, is a wonder" (*Alta*, 3/1/68; deleted from *IA*, II, 296:5).

⁸² *IA*, II, 210-211; II, 268.

literary descriptions,⁸³ even his cruelty;⁸⁴ he also refined the satire. The original passage is a series of exaggerations and extravagant "wisecracks," funny, if on a low level. A few such "cracks" are retained in the book;⁸⁵ but here Clemens makes greater use of irony.⁸⁶ Again, in revising he achieved a subtler humor.

One notices Clemens effecting the same kind of refinement when he revised his original piece on the tomb of Adam. Here is what he wrote for the *Alta*, 3/15/68:

I could not do less than shed some tender tears over poor old Adam. I could not but feel how much he had lost by dying so young. He had not seen the telegraph, or the locomotive, or the steamboat; he did not even see the flood. He missed the Paris Exposition. There was a roughness about that that cannot be over-estimated. He never had to pay three dollars a dozen for washing, and then have somebody's shirts come home to him that were too tight around the neck—but can a happiness like that atone for the suffering it must have cost him to go into company in the meagre costume of his time? When he first put on fig leaves he probably felt innocently gay; and when he finally branched out and got himself up regardless of expense, in a sheep-skin, he must have considered himself positively gorgeous. But think of Adam, with tha . . . [obscure] in and his long patriarchal beard, and think of him in a claw-hammer coat, white kids, and a moustache. The more I reflected upon what Adam had lost in being taken away so early, the more I was moved and the more I wept. The subject is too painful for contemplation, even now. Let us change it.

The mock grief is here, but it does not permeate the whole passage as it does in the revised version.⁸⁷ Clemens, in the above, seems to neglect the ironic character he has created, in order to indulge in some ludicrous incongruities; in the book he creates a mood of unrelieved sadness. Of course the reason for Mark Twain's grief is different in the two cases: originally he weeps because Adam missed so much by dying so young; later he weeps because he and Adam will never see each other.⁸⁸ The latter is the more personal reason,

⁸³ *IA*, II, 239-241; II, 266-267.

⁸⁴ *IA*, II, 270.

⁸⁵ *IA*, II, 269:18-20; II, 271:5.

⁸⁶ See *IA*, II, 268; and particularly II, 210-211.

⁸⁷ See *IA*, II, 307:6-26.

⁸⁸ The notion for this different treatment apparently was in his mind when he wrote in *Alta*, 3/22/68: "I wanted very much to have the tombs of Adam and Melchisedek opened—especially Adam's, as he was a distant relation of mine—but the priest would not do it. I would have liked very much to see how these ancient celebrities looked. It

and one that makes the tears more justifiable. And it is important that Mark Twain should weep readily, for the piece in revision had become a burlesque of Prime. This ridicule of Prime's emotionalism was made possible by Clemens's having added in the book some instances of Prime's tearful utterances.⁸⁹ Thus by altering the passage, Clemens turned what originally had been merely ludicrous into something rather subtly and richly humorous.

was only a natural curiosity, and harmless. But we shall never see old Father Adam and Melchisedek any more, because they are dead, now." Because this passage, in essence, contributed to the revised Adam passage, Clemens omitted it from *IA*, II, 311:26.

⁸⁹ One sentence in the Adam passage—"Let him who would sneer at my emotion close this volume here, for he will find little to his taste in my journeyings through Holy Land"—is taken verbatim from the excerpt from Prime's *Tent Life in the Holy Land* that appears earlier in the book (*IA*, II, 271:2-4).

